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Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Second session

New York, 1–3 September 2010

Summary record of the 1st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 1 September 2010, at 9.45 a.m.

President: Mr. Heller ..... (Mexico)

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The meeting was called to order at 9.55 a.m.

Opening of the Conference of States Parties

1. **The President** declared open the Conference of States Parties and said that the Conference would provide States, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the United Nations system with information on the best ways of achieving structural changes that would mainstream the human rights of persons with disabilities.

2. The three themes of the Conference were inclusion and the right to education, inclusion and living in the community and persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies. Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the United Nations system and progress in mainstreaming the rights of persons with disabilities into the work of the specialized agencies, including in the field, would also be discussed. For example, it was important not to exclude persons with disabilities from general education systems; the Convention contained provisions on the importance of teacher training and the intrinsic value of education in providing life and social development skills to persons with disabilities. Lastly, the Conference could speed up the substantial change needed for persons with disabilities to enjoy their rightful place in society.

3. **Mr. Sha** Zukang (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that the Convention was a critical international human rights instrument aimed at advancing the rights and living conditions of persons with disabilities. Its implementation called for policies, programmes and evaluation measures that promoted the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in society and in development agendas. He hoped that the participants would leave the Conference with a renewed commitment to the Convention and to improving the lives of persons with disabilities.

4. Persons with disabilities were more likely to be poor and to lack access to equal social, health, education and employment services. The international community had a collective responsibility to address those inequalities by advocating for increased recognition and protection of their human rights, including the right to education, adapting communities to their needs wherever possible, and changing the hearts and minds of the public regarding their abilities.

5. The first step that countries could take in tackling those issues was to sign and ratify the Convention and its Optional Protocol. During the past year, the number of signatures and ratifications of the Convention had more than doubled with 146 signatories and 90 ratifications to date. Those results represented remarkable progress in a short period of time and there was a clear acknowledgement by Member States that it was urgent to adopt new policies and programmes at the national level.

6. Some States parties had gone beyond ratification and had taken measures to implement the Convention, including by strengthening existing legislative frameworks that protected persons with disabilities or adopting anti-discrimination laws. Revisions to building codes and architectural standards had been made and a number of countries had improved their monitoring of the conditions of persons with disabilities through surveys and newly created national commissions and councils. The mainstreaming of disability issues into programmes related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was to be applauded. Across the world, persons with disabilities had benefited from a vast range of aid activities aimed at achieving the Goals. Some countries had adopted disability-inclusive monitoring and evaluation of the Goals at the regional and subregional levels; there had also been improved data collection and statistics on disability prevalence related to progress towards the MDGs. With the support of the Conference, a final push could be made in order to ensure that persons with disabilities could benefit from the full spectrum of MDG activities by the target year of 2015.

7. However, much remained to be done. Fewer than half of all Member States had become parties to the Convention and its Optional Protocol; he called on the remainder to accede to those instruments without delay. At the implementation level, there was a lack of expertise in how to plan and execute government strategies that addressed disability needs: the design of accessible buildings and services, for example, required input from experts with specialized training and experience. Without such guidance, well-intentioned efforts could fail.

8. Expertise was also needed in order to mainstream persons with disabilities into educational systems; it was unacceptable that millions of children with disabilities were not being taught to read and write. There were countless ways for governments to ensure

that school buildings, curricula and teaching staff were available to such children, but those changes would require collaboration with experts at all levels of the educational system.

9. Another challenge was how to address disability needs during times of natural disaster and armed conflict. That fact was painfully relevant as the world was buffeted by a continuous stream of earthquakes, floods, and, in many regions, wars. The international community must ensure that humanitarian operations gave persons with disabilities priority access to aid. Reconstruction efforts should provide for accessible buildings and transportation systems; the added costs were minimal but the benefits for persons with disabilities were huge.

10. With the assistance of governments, civil society, the private sector and NGOs, the human rights and economic and social needs of persons with disabilities could be advanced. There must be a renewed commitment to the needs of that large and diverse population and to programmes that would unleash their gifts, talents and abilities.

11. **Ms. Pillay** (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights), speaking in a video message, said that at present, the primary challenge was to implement the Convention; that issue had been discussed by the Human Rights Council at its March 2010 session. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) produced studies that could help to clarify the content of certain obligations established in the Convention and provided a set of good practices.

12. Articles 19 and 24 of the Convention had far-reaching implications for the well-being, participation, inclusion and personal growth of people with disabilities. The discussion on persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies was particularly timely in light of the many humanitarian crises around the world, including the earthquakes and floods of the past year. Human rights considerations were often neglected in such crises and their relevance as an immediate priority in the planning and implementation of relief operations was questioned. Instead, those crises should serve as a reminder that more had to be done to ensure the protection of persons with disabilities in situations of risk.

13. She hoped that the expanded membership of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities would strengthen its ability to work effectively and that persons with disabilities would soon be nominated and elected to membership in other human rights treaty bodies. Member States should submit their reports under the Convention in a timely manner, ratification of the Convention and its Optional Protocol should be expanded and the Committee's recommendations should be implemented. The expanded Committee would be able to engage in more substantive activities such as communications, petitions and visits. The international community had the responsibility to ensure that those efforts were matched by increased resources in order to turn the letter of the Convention into reality for persons with disabilities worldwide.

Adoption of the agenda (CRPD/CSP/2010/1)

14. *The agenda was adopted.*

Organization of work

Accreditation of non-governmental organizations

15. **The President** drew attention to the note dated 3 August 2010 from the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development (reference: DSPD-00721), which contained the names of NGOs requesting accreditation to the Conference. He took it that the States parties wished to accede to those requests.

16. *It was so decided.*

Election of the members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
(CRPD/CSP/2010/2; CRPD/CSP/2010/CRP.1, and Add.1 and 2)

17. **The President** invited the Conference to elect by secret ballot six members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to fill the vacancies that would occur on 31 December 2010. He drew attention to the curricula vitae of candidates nominated by States parties (CRPD/CSP/2010/1; CRPD/CSP/2010/1/Add.1; and CRPD/CSP/2010/1/Add.2) and noted that as indicated in document CRPD/CSP/2010/1/Add.1, one candidate, Mr. Cveto Uršič of Slovenia, had been withdrawn. He also drew attention to the election procedure and other relevant provisions set out in article 34 of the Convention.

18. *At the invitation of the President, Ms. Sunderland (Canada), Mr. Murari (India) and Mr. Aleman (Panama) acted as tellers.*

19. *A vote was taken by secret ballot.*

Number of ballot papers:	88
Invalid ballots:	2
Number of valid ballots:	86
Number of representatives voting:	86
Required majority:	44
Number of votes obtained:	
Mr. McCallum (Australia)	48
Ms. Maina (Kenya)	43
Mr. Kim Hyung Shik (Republic of Korea)	40
Ms. Degener (Germany)	35
Ms. Hadj Salah (Algeria)	31
Mr. Ben Lallahom (Tunisia)	28
Ms. Quang Chang (Guatemala)	27
Mr. Rios Espinosa (Mexico)	26
Mr. Tatić (Serbia)	26
Mr. Gombos (Hungary)	25
Mr. Bulit Goñi (Argentina)	22
Mr. Langvad (Denmark)	21
Mr. Torres Correa (Ecuador)	20
Mr. Al-Rawahi (Oman)	18
Ms. Pascual Melara (El Salvador)	18
Mr. Barri (Saudi Arabia)	12
Mr. Babu (Uganda)	11
Mr. Huerta Peralta (Peru)	11
Mr. Purcil (Philippines)	11
Mr. Diop (Guinea)	10
Mr. Moodley (South Africa)	10
Mr. Muyunda (Zambia)	10
Mr. Khairy (Sudan)	5

20. *Having obtained the required majority and the largest number of votes, Mr. McCallum (Australia) was elected a member of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.*

21. **The President** said that as five vacancies remained to be filled, a second round of voting would be held, restricted to the 10 candidates who had received the highest number of votes while not obtaining the required majority.

22. *At the invitation of the President, Ms. Sunderland (Canada), Mr. Murari (India) and Mr. Alemán (Panama) acted as tellers.*

23. *A vote was taken by secret ballot.*

Number of ballot papers:	88
Invalid ballots:	1
Number of valid ballots:	87
Number of representatives voting:	87
Required majority:	44
Number of votes obtained:	
Ms. Maina (Kenya)	56
Ms. Degener (Germany)	53
Mr. Kim Hyung Shik (Republic of Korea)	50
Mr. Rios Espinosa (Mexico)	49
Ms. Hadj Salah (Algeria)	39
Mr. Ben Lallahom (Tunisia)	39
Mr. Gombos (Hungary)	38
Mr. Tatić (Serbia)	35
Ms. Quang Chang (Guatemala)	34
Mr. Bulit Goñi (Argentina)	26

24. *Having obtained the required majority and the largest number of votes, Ms. Degener (Germany), Mr. Kim Hyung Shik (Republic of Korea), Ms. Maina (Kenya), and Mr. Rios Espinosa (Mexico) were elected members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.*

25. **The President** said that as one vacancy remained to be filled, a third round of voting would be held, restricted to the two candidates who had received the highest number of votes in the second round while not obtaining the required majority.

26. *At the invitation of the President, Ms. Sunderland (Canada), Mr. Murari (India) and Mr. Alemán (Panama) acted as tellers.*

27. *A vote was taken by secret ballot.*

Number of ballot papers:	86
Number of valid ballots:	86
Abstentions:	1
Number of representatives voting:	85
Required majority:	43
Number of votes obtained:	
Mr. Ben Lallahom (Tunisia)	45
Ms. Hadj Salah (Algeria)	40

28. *Having obtained the required majority and the largest number of votes, Mr. Ben Lallahom was elected a member of the Committee on the Rights if Persons with Disabilities.*

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.